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ABSTRACT

This series of three papers explores current and emerging issues in professional preparation for the early care and education field. The papers examine a set of interrelated issues: the design and supply of preparation programs within and outside higher education; access to preparation in relation to the need for diversifying the leadership of the field; and efforts to improve the effectiveness of strategies for meeting the needs of children and their families. The first paper, "The 'Landscape' of Professional Preparation for the Early Care and Education Field," looks primarily at all levels of undergraduate and community-based programs in the United States, reviewing the range of organizations, levels of training, and distribution of programs by discipline and geography. The second paper, "The Demographics of Professional Preparation in the Early Care and Education Field," uses data from the Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to compare overall enrollment and degree completion trends in higher education relating to early care and education. The third paper, "Evolving Our Vision of Professional Preparation for the Early Care and Education Field," explores the future of professional preparation and development for the early care and education field, addressing several questions: How can the field prepare practitioners to be effective with all of the nation's young children? What are the responsibilities of early childhood programs to the families of the children they enroll? Are the ways are defined and needs categorized still relevant if effective response is given to the first two questions? (Contains 60 references.) (EV)